

REMARKS

This Response is submitted in reply to the Office Action dated August 31, 2004. Claims 1-13 are pending in the patent application. Claims 1, 7, 8 and 9 have been amended. Claims 3 and 4 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. No new matter have been added by the amendments made herein.

In the Office Action, Claims 1, 2, 7-9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e). Claims 3-6 and 10-13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a). Applicants respectfully submit, for at least the reasons set forth below, that the rejections have been overcome or are improper. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the patentability of Claims 1-13.

Claims 1, 2 and 7-9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,697,840 to Godefroid et al. ("*Godefroid*"). Applicants respectfully disagree with and traverse this rejection because *Godefroid* does not disclose all the elements of Claim 1-13.

Applicants have amended independent Claim 1 to include among other things, the elements of: "storage means for storing at least one list of users associated with the user space, wherein said list is generated by the first user and includes at least one of a second user denied admission to the user space and a second user granted admission to the user space" and "determining means for determining whether the second user is denied admission to the user space or granted admission to the user space based on the list of users stored in said storage means."

The Office Action states that *Godefroid* discloses all of the element of independent Claim 1 except *Godefroid* "fails to disclose storing lists of users designated by a first user as being denied or admitted to a particular user space." (See the Office Action, page 3). Accordingly, *Godefroid* does not disclose, teach or suggest all of the elements of amended Claim 1.

Amended independent Claims 7, 8 and 9 include similar elements to amended Claim 1. Therefore, Claims 1, 7, 8 and 9, and Claims 2, 5, 6 which depend from Claim 1 and Claims 10-13, which depend from Claim 9, are each patentably distinguished over *Godefroid* and are in condition for allowance.

Claims 3, 4, 6, 10, 11 and 13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being anticipated by *Godefroid* in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,750,881 to Appelman (“*Appelman*”). Applicants respectfully disagree with and traverse this rejection because the combination of *Godefroid* and *Appelman* does not disclose, teach or suggest the elements of these claims.

Godefroid is directed to presence awareness initiatives that are implemented in a collaborative system to enable a user to set presence awareness policies. (See the Abstract). As described by *Godefroid*, a user can communicate with other users in a collaborative system using collaborative communication (i.e., multi-party text chat). In such a system, users can “initiate a collaborative communication session, invite others to join an existing session, request to participate in an existing session, accept or decline others’ requests to join a session, or leave a session.” (Col. 5, lines 50-57). In some instances, joining a session may require “the session initiator’s consent, or a vote of all participants that shows the consent of the majority.” (Col. 5, lines 58-62). *Godefroid* does not disclose, teach or suggest that such presence awareness initiatives can be employed in a virtual space or a user space within a virtual space as in the claimed invention. Also, *Godefroid* does not disclose, teach or suggest storing user information in a list which denies or grants access to a virtual space.

Moreover, *Appelman* is directed to user definable on-line co-user lists or “buddy lists” that enable users to track the logon status of selected co-users on an on-line system or other network system. The system in *Appelman* displays the co-user information in real time to the tracking user on a unique graphical interface. (See the Abstract). Specifically, *Appelman* describes a system for modifying and/or controlling a “buddy list” for a user. Some user defined options include restricting all members from adding a user to their buddy list and from sending the user “Buddy Chat Invitations” or other information. (Col. 5, lines 22-31; Fig. 6). Additionally, another option for a user is to grant permission for all other members to add the user to their buddy lists, etc. (Col. 5, lines 31-50). Thus, *Appelman* is directed to a system for controlling buddy lists in an online network where a user can determine which users appear on their buddy list and which users can display their user information on a buddy list. *Appelman* does not disclose, teach or suggest employing its system in a virtual environment or space.

Appelman also does not disclose, teach or suggest a storage device for storing at least one list of users associated with the user space, where the list is generated by the first user and includes information on whether the second user is denied admission to the user space or granted admission to the user space or determining whether the second user is denied admission to the user space or granted admission to the user space based on the list of users stored in the storage device as in the claimed invention.

For at least these reasons, the combination of *Godefroid* and *Appelman* does not disclose, teach or suggest the elements of amended Claim 1. Therefore, Claim 1 and Claims 2, 5 and 6, which depend from Claim 1, are each patentably distinguished from the combination of *Godefroid* and *Appelman* and are in condition for allowance.

Amended Claims 7, 8 and 9 includes similar elements to amended Claim 1. Therefore, Claims 7, 8 and 9, and Claims 10-13, which depend from Claim 9, are each patentably distinguished from the combination of *Godefroid* and *Appelman* and are in condition for allowance.

Claims 5 and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Godefroid* in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,212,548 to DeSimone et al. ("*DeSimone*"). Claim 5 depends from amended Claim 1. Claim 12 depends from amended Claim 9. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 5 and 12 are allowable for at least the reasons set forth above for with respect to independent Claims 1 and 9 because the combination of *Godefroid* and *DeSimone* does not disclose, teach or suggest the novel elements of Claims 5 and 12 in combination with the novel elements of independent Claims 1 and 9, respectively. For these reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 5 and 12 are patentably distinguished over the combination of *Godefroid* and *DeSimone* and are in condition for allowance.

In light of above, Applicant respectfully submits that Claims 1, 2 and 5-13 are patentable over the art of record because the cited references do not disclose, teach or suggest all of the elements of these claims. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that Claims 1, 2 and 5-13 be deemed allowable at this time and that a timely notice of allowance be issued in this case.

No fees are due in this case. If any other fees are due in connection with this application as a whole, the Patent Office is authorized to deduct the fees from Deposit

App. No. 10,016,566

Response to Office Action dated August 31, 2004

Account No. 02-1818. If such a withdrawal is made, please indicate the attorney docket number (0112857-300) on the account statement.

Respectfully submitted,

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